

TEL IFSHAR (EAST): THE COINS

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Two hundred and four bronze coins were discovered during the excavations at Tel Ifshar (Yannai 2021).¹ One hundred and forty-four were unidentifiable, and one is modern. This assemblage includes two small hoards or deposits (Hoards A and B), both comprising bronze coins struck in Caesarea and dating from the reign of Severus Alexander (222–235 CE). The contents of the hoards are similar and homogeneous; their deposition seems to have been contemporary.

The numismatic evidence of the isolated coins is continuous from the third century CE to the end of the sixth century CE (Nos. 5–46). Four coins are earlier (Nos. 1–4): a coin of the Roman Procurators in Judaea (6–12 CE); a *prutah* of Agrippa I from 41/42 CE; a worn Roman Provincial coin bearing a rectangular countermark, which is roughly dated to the period between the two Jewish revolts (67–70 CE to 132–136 CE); and a coin of the Roman Administration in Judaea from the reign of Domitian, dated to 93 CE. These early coins may have arrived at the site much later than their date of issue.

Of the nine isolated Roman Provincial coins (Nos. 3–9, 11, 12), five were struck in Caesarea (Nos. 4–6, 8, 9). Of special interest is No. 8, depicting on the reverse a galley with the legend ‘*Portus Augusti*’ above it. This type of coin was minted only under Trajan Decius (249–251 CE), and it illustrates the last commemoration of *Sebastos*, the ancient harbor of Caesarea (Hohlfelder 1992:78; Barag 1996:613–614). Another coin which merits special attention is No. 7, from the reign of Philip Junior (247–249 CE), minted in Neapolis. The type—‘emperor riding’—is well known; however, our specimen depicts the figure facing left, and this seems to be an unpublished variant.²

The dominance of Roman Provincial coins from Caesarea is strengthened by the evidence from the two small hoards: all the coins were minted in Caesarea, the capital of the province of Judaea, later called *Syria Palaestina*. The high incidence of coins from Caesarea is easily explained by Tel

¹ The coins were cleaned at the IAA laboratories under the direction of Ella Altmark and were photographed by Sando Mandraea. The article was edited by Smadar Gabrieli.

² Another specimen with the emperor raiding to the left appears in Electronic Auction 357, Lot 328 from August 12, 2015 of the Classical Numismatic Group (CNG). My thanks to Lior Sandberg from the IAA Coin Department, who provided me with this information.

Ifshar's proximity to the city. This demonstrates that during the Roman Provincial period coins circulated primarily in the vicinity of the mint.

Hoard A (L546, B4131) comprises nine coins. Seven of these belong to the most common type of Severus Alexander 'eagle supporting wreath' (Nos. B1–B7). The hoard is related to the earliest phase of the building (phase IV), discovered under Floor 546 in the northwestern end of the east wing. It thus points to 222–235 CE as the *terminus post quem* for the construction of the building.

Hoard B (L457, B1818) comprises six coins. Four are of the same type cited above, minted in Caesarea; the other two were unidentifiable. Unfortunately, the hoard comes from a disturbed locus outside the structure. The circumstances leading to the deposition of the two hoards remain uncertain.

Most of the identifiable Byzantine coins (Nos. 37–46) bear dates. The fourth- and fifth-century coins are quite conventional and do not deserve any special discussion; nevertheless, a large module *folles* of Justinian I minted in Cyzicus and dating from 539/540 (No. 40) is worthy of mention. The latest coin (No. 43) is a *folles* of Maurice Tiberius, struck in Antioch in 593/594 CE; it thus seems that the site was abandoned before the Persian conquest of 614 CE.

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Fig. 1. Isolated coins.



Fig. 2. Hoard A.



Fig. 3. Hoard B.

CATALOGUE

ISOLATED COINS¹

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
1	529	4182	2.24	16 × 17	↑	Ear of corn Augustus—Roman Procurators in Judaea	KAICA-POC Palm tree; date illegible	6–12		<i>AJC</i> 2:281, Nos. 1–5	65672
2	163	1342	1.78	16		[BACIAEΩC AΓPIΠA] Canopy Agrippa I – prutah	L – [ς] Three ears of corn stemming from two leaves	41/42	Jerusalem	<i>AJC</i> 2: 249, No. 11	65645
3	546	4106	6.52	22 × 23		Obliterated. Rectangular countermark: head r. Roman Provincial	Obliterated	66–136			65675
4	559	4191	9.58	22 × 23	↘	[IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM PM TRP XII] Head r., laureate Roman Administration in Judaea: Domitian	[IMP XXIII COS XVI CENS PPP] Nike advancing l., holding wreath and palm branch	93	Caesarea	<i>AJC</i> 2: 291, No. 10	65687
5	447	1733	7	17	↑	[--] Head r., laureate Elagabalus (218–222)	[--] Head of Serapis r.		Caesarea	Cf. Kadman 1957:114, No. 82	65656
6*	945	4871	24.79	29 × 30	↑	[IMP C M IVL PHILIPPVS AVG] Bust r., laureate and draped Philip Senior (244–249)	[COL PRI FL AVG FC CAES] Dionysos reclining on panther advancing r. Philip Junior (247–249)		Caesarea	Kadman 1957:120, No. 113	65664
7*	553	4133	12.39	25 × 27	↓	[IMP C] MIVL PHILIPPVS AVG Bust r., laureate and draped, seen from back Trajan Decius (249–251)	COLSER [ς] Emperor riding l. on horseback, rising r. hand. In l. field, above, Mt. Gerizim; in ex.: [N]EAPOL		Neapolis	Unpublished variant. very rare	65686
8*	487	1945	16.24	25 × 27	↓	[IMP CCMQ TRAJ]DE[CIVS AVG] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	COL PIR FL AVG CAES MET SPI Galley advancing l. Above: PORTVS AVGVSTI		Caesarea	Kadman 1957:128, No. 152	65665

¹ Coins bearing an asterisk are illustrated in Fig. 1.


CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
						Trebonianus Gallus (251–253)					
9	505	4037	6.36	17 × 19	↓	IMP CC VIB GALLVS PF AVG Bust r., radiate, cuirassed and draped	COL PF AVG FC CAES METR P S PAL Head of Tyche r.		Caesarea	Kadman 1957:136, No. 200	65670
						Volusian – sesterčius					
10*	311	3099	13.85	26 × 27	↑	[IMP CAE C VIB] VOL[VSIANO AVG] Bust r., laureate and draped	[IVNONI] MARTIALI] Juno seated within distyle temple with dome. On both sides: S–C	253	Rome	R/C IV, 3:188, No. 253	65647
						Roman Provincial					
11	446		4.63	19 × 21		Bust r. Inscription illegible.	Obliterated.	3rd c.?			65655
12	444		6.02	23	↑	...PF AVG Head r., laureate.	Obliterated	3rd c.			65653
						Diocletian (284–305) — antoninianus					
13	150	1251	3.11	22	↑	IMP C C VA[L] DIOCLETIANVS PF AVG] Bust r., radiate, cuirassed and draped.	CONCO[R]DIA MILI[T]VM Emperor stg. in front of Jupiter, receiving from him a Victory on globe. Beneath: EA; in ex.: XXI		Cyzicus	Cf. R/C V.2:253, No. 306	65643
						Constantine I					
14*	487	1965	2.75	20	↑	CONSTAN–TINVS AVG Head r., laureate	PROVIDEN–TIAE AVGG Camp gate. Above, star. In ex.: SMANTA	324–330	Antioch	LRBC 1:30, No. 1333	65666
						324–330					
15	549	4112	3.04	18	↓	Bust l. Inscription illegible	[PROVIDENTIAE...] Camp gate. Above, star. Mintmark illegible.			Cf. LRBC 1:30, No. 1324	65685
						330–335					
16	Dump	1085	2.57	18 × 19	↑	Head of Constantinople I, helmeted, spear on r. shoulder	[CONSTAN–TINOPO]LIS Victory stg. l. on galley. In ex.: SMAN		Antioch	Cf. LRBC 1:30, No. 1360 or 31, No. 1369	65690

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
17	582	4205	1.95	15 × 16	↓	... PF AVG Bust r.	335-341 GLORIAE-XERC-ITVS] Two soldiers stg. facing, holding spears and shields. Between them, standard. In ex.: AQS		Aquilea	Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 1:17, Nos. 669-696	65689
18	536	4174	1.01	15 × 16	↓	CONSTANS PFI AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped.	Constantius I VICTORIAE[DD AVG Q NN] Two Victories stg. vis-à-vis, holding wreaths. In ex.: SMT[S...]	341-346	Thessal	<i>LRBC</i> 1:21, Nos. 860-861	65674
19	119	1088	2.45	15	↑	[DN CONSTANTIVS PF AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped.	Constantius II FEL TEMP RE-PARATIO Virtus spearing fallen horseman. Mintmark illegible	351-361		Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:100, No. 2632	65641
20	470	1903	1.90	17	↑	Same.	Same				65663
21	410	1656	2.81	14	↑	Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped. Inscription illegible.	364-375 SECVRITAS-REIPVBLICAE Victory advancing l., holding wreath and palm branch. Mintmark illegible			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:100, No. 2656-2657	65651
22	114	1086, 1087	1.08	12 × 14	↑	Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped. Inscription illegible	383-395 [SALVS REI-PVBLICAE] Victory advancing l., holding trophy and dragging captive. Mintmark illegible			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:102, Nos. 2768-2771	65639
23	449 (collapse)	1.16		13	↑	Same	Same				65657
24	459 (surface)		0.78	11 × 13	↓	Same	Same				65662
25	501	4030	1.02	12		Same	Same				65667
26	Surface		0.79	11 × 14	↓	Same	Same				65692

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
							Arcadius				
27	564	4147	1.53	14 × 15	↖	DN ARCADIVS PF AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped.	GLORIA ROMANORVM Three emperors stg. facing, holding scepters. Mintmark illegible	395–408		Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:102, No. 2801	65688
28	119	1089	1.75	13		Same, but name of emperor illegible	Same			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:102, Nos. 2801–2804	65642
							Uncertain				
29	529	4190	2.67	18		Obliterated	[SOL INVIC]TO COMITI Sol, sig. l., raising l. arm and holding globe. Mintmark illegible	First quarter 4th c.		Cf. <i>RIC</i> VII:238, No. 56	65673
30	114	1068	0.83	11 × 12		Head r.	Obliterated	4th c.			65640
31	194	1591	1.29	15 × 16		Bust r., pearl-diademed draped and cuirassed	Obliterated	Same			65646
32	406	1559	1.31	9		Same.	Same	Same			65649
33	443	1769	0.95	11	↑	Same.	Same	Same			65652
34	445 (surface)		1.12	10		...AVG Same	Same	Same			65654
35	501	4030	1.56	11		Same	Same	Same			65669
							Zeno(?) – nummus				
36	525	4145	0.21	7		Bust r. Inscription illegible		476–491	Constant	Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2:91, No. 2280	65671
							Anastasius I – half follis				
37	Western balk	4185	4.42	18	↓	Bust r. diademed and draped. Inscription illegible	K on l. field, cross; on r. field: B	507–512	Constant	<i>DOC</i> 1:17, No. 21b	65693
							Justin I (518–527) – follis				
38	Surface		15.32	28	↓	Bust r. diademed and draped. Inscription illegible	M on l. field, star; on r. field: cross; above, cross; beneath: A ; in ex.: COIN		Constant	<i>DOC</i> 1:40, No. 9a.	65691
39*	157	1508	17.54	30	↑	DN IVSTI–NVS PP AV Bust r. diademed and draped	Same, but Γ beneath		Same	<i>DOC</i> 1:40, No. 9c.	65644

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
40*	110	1054	22.76	41	↑	Justinian I – follis (medallion) DNIVSTINIANVS PP AVG Bust facing, wearing crown with pendilia, cuirassed, holding globe with cross in l. hand	M on l. field: ANNO; on r. field: XIII; above, cross; beneath: A; in ex.: KYZ	539/540	Cyzicus	DOC 1:125, No. 165b.	65638
41	Surface		7.17	23 × 24	↓	Justin II – half follis Justin and Sophia facing, seated on double throne. Inscription illegible	K on l. field: ANNO; above: cross on r. field: 1	569/570	Constant	DOC 1:215, No. 48.	65695
42	406	1562	15.88	28 × 30	↓	Same	M on l. field: ANNO; above, christogram; on r. field: III beneath: B; in ex.: CON	573/574	Constant	DOC 1:210, No. 36a.	65650
43*	491	1936	12.16	28	↘	Maurice Tiberius – follis ΘN MAΥI – CN PAVT Bust facing, wearing crown with pendilia and consular robe, holding mappa in l. hand and scepter with eagle in r. hand	M on l. field: ANNO; above, cross; on r. field: XII; beneath: Γ; in ex.: THEΥP	593/594	Antioch	DOC 1:342, No. 164c.	65668
44	144	1228	1.36	14	↑	Byzantine – dodecanummium Bust r.	I+B in ex.: AΛEΞ	6th c.	Alexandria	Cf. DOC 1:157, No. 274 (Justinian I)	65696
45	W118		0.70	13 × 14		Obliterated	Same				65694
46	403	1546	1.99	15		Same	Same				65648

CATALOGUE (cont.)

HOARD A (LOCUS 546, REG. No. 4131; Fig. 2)

No.	Weight (g)	diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
Severus Alexander (222–235)								
A1*	8.60	23	↗	[IMP CAE SEV ALEXANDER] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	CIF A F C CAES METROPOLIS Eagle supporting wreath: SPQR	Caesarea	Kadman 1957:116, No. 96 (but bust seen from back)	65676
A2*	8.44	18	↑	Same	CIF A F C CAES METRO[POLIS] Same	Same	Kadman 1957:116, No. 100	65678
A3*	5.68	18	↓	Same	Same	Same		65679
A4*	9.31	21	↑	Same	[CIF A F C CAES METROP]OLIS Same	Same	Kadman 1957:116, No. 97	65681
A5*	9.90	20 × 22	↑	Same	Same	Same		65682
A6*	10.92	19 × 20	↑	Same	Same	Same		65683
A7*	6.37	18	↓	IM C SEV ALEXANDER Same	[CIF A FC CA]ES METROPOLI[S] Same		Kadman 1957:116, No. 96 (but half denomination)	65684
A8*	9.47	23	↑	Same	[COL I F AVG FC] CAESA Rome Nikephoros seated l. on throne; in ex.: [MET]ROP	Same	Kadman 1957:116, No. 92	65677
A9*	6.11	18	↑	Same	[C I F AVG CAESA...] Bust of Serapis r.	Same	Kadman 1957:114, No. 89	65680

HOARD B (LOCUS 457, Reg. No. 1818; Fig. 3)

No.	Weight (g)	diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
Severus Alexander (222–235)								
B1*	10.02	21	↑	IMP CAE[SEV ALEXANDER] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	CIF A F C CAES METROPOLIS Eagle supporting wreath: SPQR	Caesarea	Kadman 1957:116, No. 96	65658
B2*	10.01	20	↓	Same	Same	Same	Kadman 1957:116, No. 98	65659
B3*	11.58	20	↑	Same	Same	Same	Kadman 1957:116, No. 96	65660
B4*	10.78	22	↑	Same	Same	Same		65661